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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/880,731	06/13/2001	Youichiro Nishikawa	021380	4948

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WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP
1250 CONNECTICUT AVENUE, NW
SUITE 700
WASHINGTON, DC 20036

EXAMINER

TODD, GREGORY G

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2157

DATE MAILED: 10/05/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/880,731

Applicant(s)

NISHIKAWA ET AL.

Examiner

Gregory G. Todd

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 11 July 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7,9-12 and 14-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7,9-12 and 14-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This is a second office action in response to applicant's amendment and request for continued examination filed, 11 July 2005, of application filed, with the above serial number, on 13 June 2001 in which claims 1, 3-5, 7, and 17 have been amended and claim 17 has been added. Claims 1-17 are therefore pending in the application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is unclear whether the network node of the remote user in the providing step is different than the network node of the remote user in the sending step. If they are not different, then the claim is an exact duplicate of claim 14 and one of the claims would have to be cancelled.

Claim 4 recites the limitation "a second monitor unit" in line 14. There is insufficient antecedent basis (first monitor unit) for this limitation in the claim.

Claim 5 recites the limitation "a third monitor unit" in line 14. There is insufficient antecedent basis (first or second monitor unit) for this limitation in the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

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(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 3-7, 9-12, 14 and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson et al (hereinafter "Johnson", 6,580,950) in view of Ouchi et al (hereinafter "Ouchi", 6,539,404).

Johnson teaches the invention, substantially as claimed, including networked appliance controlling (see abstract).

As per Claim 1, Johnson teaches an information processing apparatus operable from a remote user comprising:

a communication unit which provides a function to interface with a network (at least Fig. 1; global network with data center);

a connection request unit which generates a request to establish a connection with the network (at least col. 7, lines 47-67; requesting connection and transmitting connect command);

a server function unit which provides a predetermined service, when the network node of the remote user accesses the apparatus using the allotted logical address, to the node as a client (at least Fig. 5; col. 4, lines 16-39; control unit and/or data center with servers); and

a monitor unit which detects a trigger signal transmitted by a remote node in compliance with a communication protocol which does not require connection to the network, wherein the connection request unit generates the request upon detecting the signal (at least col. 5, lines 1-6, 63-67; alert signal upon event-occurring connection).

Johnson fails to *explicitly* disclose an address holder which holds a logical address allotted when the connection is established and an address reporting unit which sends the allotted logical address to a network node of the remote user. However, the use and advantages for using logical addresses is extremely well known to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made as evidenced by the teachings of Ouchi. Ouchi teaches an IP address of a server being e-mailed to a user and the user accessing the IP address of URL through the email (at least Ouchi col. 20 lines 52-67). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate Ouchi's use of address allotment for servers as it is very well known in the art for a server to obtain an (IP) address upon connecting to a network and since Johnson's system operates on networks such as the Internet (see col. 4, lines 41-48) where IP address allotment is a standard practice performed for connecting users.

As per Claim 3, the apparatus of claim 1 further comprising:

a second communication unit which communicates with an external appliance which is under the control of the apparatus (at least col. 5, lines 29-52; control unit); and

an appliance controller which controls the external appliance via the second communication unit (at least col. 5, lines 29-52; control unit controlling devices);

wherein the server function unit, as the predetermined service, receives an instruction for the control of the external appliance from the user node and transmits the instruction to the appliance controller and the appliance controller converts the instruction to a control command of the external appliance and sends the command to

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the appliance via the second communication unit (at least col. 7, lines 47-67; col. 5, lines 29-52; user connecting to control unit through web browser and providing commands to control various devices).

As per Claim 4, Johnson teaches an information processing apparatus operable from a remote user comprising:

- a communication unit which provides a function to interface with a network (at least Fig. 1; global network with data center);

- a connection request unit which generates a request to establish a connection with the network (at least col. 7, lines 47-67; requesting connection and transmitting connect command);

- a server function unit which provides a predetermined service, when the network node of the remote user accesses the apparatus using the allotted logical address, to the node as a client (at least Fig. 5; col. 4, lines 16-39; control unit and/or data center with servers); and

- a second monitor unit which generates a trigger signal when status of the external appliance reported via the second communication unit satisfies a predetermined condition, wherein the connection request unit generates the request upon detecting the signal generated by the second monitor unit (at least col. 5, lines 1-6, 40-52; lighting controls transmitting to control unit which lights are activated, etc).

Johnson fails to *explicitly* disclose an address holder which holds a logical address allotted when the connection is established and an address reporting unit which sends the allotted logical address to a network node of the remote user. However, the

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use and advantages for using logical addresses is extremely well known to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made as evidenced by the teachings of Ouchi.

Ouchi teaches an IP address of a server being e-mailed to a user and the user accessing the IP address of URL through the email (at least Ouchi col. 20 lines 52-67).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate Ouchi's use of address allotment for servers as it is very well known in the art for a server to obtain an (IP) address upon connecting to a network and since Johnson's system operates on networks such as the Internet (see col. 4, lines 41-48) where IP address allotment is a standard practice performed for connecting users.

As per Claim 5, Johnson teaches an information processing apparatus operable from a remote user comprising:

- a communication unit which provides a function to interface with a network (at least Fig. 1; global network with data center);

- a connection request unit which generates a request to establish a connection with the network (at least col. 7, lines 47-67; requesting connection and transmitting connect command);

- a server function unit which provides a predetermined service, when the network node of the remote user accesses the apparatus using the allotted logical address, to the node as a client (at least Fig. 5; col. 4, lines 16-39; control unit and/or data center with servers); and

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a third monitor unit which generates a trigger signal when information from a sensor sensing ambient environment satisfies a predetermined condition, wherein the connection request unit generates the request upon detecting the signal generated by the third monitor unit (at least col. 7, lines 6-15; col. 5 line 63 - col. 6 line 11; monitoring usage and consumption data and surpassing threshold levels).

Johnson fails to *explicitly* disclose an address holder which holds a logical address allotted when the connection is established and an address reporting unit which sends the allotted logical address to a network node of the remote user. However, the use and advantages for using logical addresses is extremely well known to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made as evidenced by the teachings of Ouchi. Ouchi teaches an IP address of a server being e-mailed to a user and the user accessing the IP address of URL through the email (at least Ouchi col. 20 lines 52-67). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate Ouchi's use of address allotment for servers as it is very well known in the art for a server to obtain an (IP) address upon connecting to a network and since Johnson's system operates on networks such as the Internet (see col. 4, lines 41-48) where IP address allotment is a standard practice performed for connecting users.

As per Claim 6, the apparatus of claim 1 further comprising a disconnection request unit which disconnects from the network when access from the logical address has been suspended for a predetermined period (at least col. 5, lines 1-26).

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As per Claim 7, the apparatus of claim 2 further comprising an authentication unit which determines whether the remote node that issued the trigger signal is a user node managed by the apparatus (at least col. 6, lines 36-50; user name and password).

As per Claim 12, Johnson teaches an information processing method operable from a remote user comprising:

- waiting in a stand-by mode in an off-line state as an initial state (at least col. 5, lines 1-20; connection to network upon event-occurrence);

- establishing connection with a network upon detecting a predetermined trigger signal (at least col. 5, lines 1-20, 63-67; connection to network upon event-occurrence / alert signal);

- sending the allotted logical address to a network node of the remote user (at least col. 5 line 63 - col. 6 line 11; reporting to user); and

- providing a predetermined service, when a network node of the remote user connects to the allotted logical address, to the node as a client (at least col. 6, lines 13-50; various uses of controlling devices).

Johnson fails to *explicitly* disclose an address holder which holds a logical address allotted when the connection is established and an address reporting unit which sends the allotted logical address to a network node of the remote user. However, the use and advantages for using logical addresses is extremely well known to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made as evidenced by the teachings of Ouchi. Ouchi teaches an IP address of a server being e-mailed to a user and the user accessing the IP address of URL through the email (at least Ouchi col. 20 lines 52-67).

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Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate Ouchi's use of address allotment for servers as it is very well known in the art for a server to obtain an (IP) address upon connecting to a network and since Johnson's system operates on networks such as the Internet (see col. 4, lines 41-48) where IP address allotment is a standard practice performed for connecting users.

As per Claim 17, Johnson fails to *explicitly* disclose wherein the allotted logical address is sent to the network node of the remote user by an e-mail. However, the use and advantages for emailing logical addresses is extremely well known to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made as evidenced by the teachings of Ouchi. Ouchi teaches an IP address of a server being e-mailed to a user and the user accessing the IP address of URL through the email (at least Ouchi col. 20 lines 52-67). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate Ouchi's use of address allotment for servers as it is very well known in the art for a server to obtain an (IP) address upon connecting to a network and since Johnson's system operates on networks such as the Internet (see col. 4, lines 41-48) where IP address allotment is a standard practice performed for connecting users.

Claim 14 does not add or define any additional limitations over claim 12 and therefore is rejected for similar reasons.

Claims 9-11 do not add or define any additional limitations over claims 3-6 and therefore are rejected for similar reasons.

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5. Claims 15-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Johnson et al (hereinafter "Johnson", 6,580,950) in view of Ouchi et al (hereinafter "Ouchi", 6,539,404) and further in view of Feder et al (hereinafter "Feder", 6,512,754).

As per Claim 15, Johnson and Ouchi teach the apparatus of claim 1, wherein said network is the internet, and Ouchi further teaches the logical address is an Internet Protocol address, but fails to *explicitly* disclose the connection request unit relies on Point-to-point Protocol. However, the use and advantages for using logical addresses is extremely well known to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made as evidenced by the teachings of Feder. Feder teaches using PPP IP address assignment for users on a home network (at least Feder col. 9 line 47 - col. 10 line 3). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate Feder's use of PPP connection and, in addition to Ouchi, IP address usage for end users as this is very well known in the art since Johnson and Ouchi's systems operate on networks such as the Internet (see col. 4, lines 41-48) where IP address usage is a standard practice performed for connecting users and PPP connections are standard ways to connect to the internet and using email systems. Ouchi further uses Microsoft Exchange for emailing which can use a PPP system (at least col. 20, lines 22-37).

Claim 16 does not add or define any additional limitations over claim 15 and therefore is rejected for similar reasons.

Response to Arguments

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6. Applicant's arguments filed 11 July 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicants argue, substantially, that the system of Johnson requires the connection to be permanent, while that of the claimed invention merely requires a connection based on a request.

In response, Johnson clearly states "if the control unit is online and receives the connect command...thereby establishing a secure connection" (see col. 7, lines 47-67), thus Johnson's system is not connected at all times as the control unit would have to connect to the network for the user to use the system. In addition, as previously cited in column 5, lines 1-20, Johnson teaches the control unit being "programmed to connect to the global computer network either full-time, periodically, or only when an event occurs from one of the control devices." Wherein such an event is triggered by an alert signal, see column 5 line 54 - column 6 line 11, signaling a threshold condition has been breached, making an event, signaling a connection to be made.

Conclusion

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Newly cited Park, Nagaoka et al, and Sekiguchi, in addition to previously cited Tari et al, Sawada, Seong, Ryan et al, Myer et al, Humpleman et al, and Kikinis are cited for disclosing pertinent information related to the claimed invention. Applicants are requested to consider the prior art reference for relevant teachings when responding to this office action.

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8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Gregory G. Todd whose telephone number is (571)272-4011. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9:00am-6:00pm w/ first Fridays off.


If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ario Etienne can be reached on (571)272-4001. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Gregory Todd

Patent Examiner

Technology Center 2100


ABDULLAH SALA
Primary Examiner